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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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July 1, 1992

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Holland Shepherd, Senior Reclamation Specialist *HWS*

RE: Site Inspection, W. K. Enterprises, Small Fry Mine, M/037/022, San Juan County, Utah

Date of Inspection: June 30, 1992

Time of Inspection: 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Conditions: Sunny, warm

Participants: Sal Venticinque, BLM; Holland Shepherd, DOGM

Purpose of Inspection: The purpose of this inspection was to evaluate the reclamation performed at the Small Fry last spring of 1991. The operator recently requested that the Division make an inspection of the site to determine whether or not complete bond release can be made. This request was made in early June, 1992.

This site was reclaimed by the operator with the idea in mind that reclaiming down to the 5 acre limit would allow the operator to obtain bond release for the site and to change the status of the mining operation from a Large Mining Operation to a Small Mining Operation. Resulting from an earlier agreement with the Division, made three years ago, the operator has reclaimed only that portion of the site which he felt he would no longer need. Some 2-3 acres of the site still remain to be reclaimed.

According to our new policy, which addresses sites that were permitted before the change in the act (addressing sites that are 5 acres and under), any site that was over 5 acres to begin with and permitted as an over 5 acre site, would have to be reclaimed in its entirety before bond release could be made, even though the site was reclaimed to below a 5 acre status. The Small Fry falls into this category.

The portion of the site that was reclaimed by the operator has achieved some revegetation success. The plants, however, are extremely sparse on some large

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portions of the reclaimed area. This portion of the site could stand to be scarified and reseeded again, owing to the sparsity of vegetation. The plants that are present on the site that are considered desirable for reclamation include: indian ricegrass, foxtail barley, and rabbitbrush; the rabbitbrush seems to be growing heartily and is the dominant species planted in the original seed mix. The most abundant plants growing on the site are undesirable for reclamation purposes and include halogeton and russian thistle. These species are acceptable during the initial stages of reclamation, but not long term. It is conceivable that over time natural revegetation will occur over most of this area.

The portion of the site that the operator has left unreclaimed includes the mine's access road, which is about .5 mile in length and about 20 feet in width. It also includes 6 excavations in the side of the rock cliff wall, which includes: the mine portal itself, the office facility, the shop facility, a couple of magazines, and the compressor shack. All of these openings are open and unlocked at this time.

The hillside that drops off to the east of the portal pad, drops at an extremely steep angle and would need to be regraded to a 2:1 or 3:1 slope before reclamation would be satisfied. This portion of the site is where the low grade ore stockpile used to be situated so contains some of the remains of the ore, which also inhibits plant growth. This portion of the site would be difficult to reclaim.

Also, before final reclamation release could be made, all of the openings on the cliff wall would have to be sealed up.

Another item which needs to be addressed before final release could be made is removal of the power lines that come down on to the mine site from up and over the cliff. These power lines have been disconnected from the main line; however, the wires and the poles would have to be removed from the site before final reclamation release could be satisfied. The operator has requested, since this is on patented land, that certain facilities be allowed to stay, such as some of the portal openings which do not extend significantly back underground. I would assume that they would also want the power lines to remain intact. They have indicated that they would want to utilize the area for some kind of future farm use.

Recommendations: I recommend that the Division not allow final reclamation release at this time, because of the fact that portions of the site still needs to be addressed in regard to reclamation. The portal needs to be sealed up, the pad slopes need to be

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regraded and reclaimed, portions of the road need to be reclaimed, and the power line needs to be removed. I also recommend that the Division decide whether it is acceptable to leave the openings that the operator has requested be left for future use along with the operator's access road and the power lines.

jb

cc: Bob Shumway, W. K. Enterprises
Sal Venticinque, BLM, Grand RA

Moab

